The Blessedness of the Dead who die in the LORD.

A

SERMON

Preached at the Publick Lecture,
Tuesday, April 6. 1731.
IN THE
Hall of Harvard-College,
In *CAMBRIDGE*, N. E.

Upon the News of the DEATH of

Thomas Hollis, Esq;

of *LONDON*,
The most bountiful *Benefactor* to that Society.

By EDWARD WIGGLESWORTH, D. D.
And *Hollis*-Professor of Divinity.

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PREFACE.

SOLOMON the wisest of meer men has said (a) *That the Soul be without Knowledge, it is not good.* One greater than *Solomon*, even our blessed *Redeemer* said to his eternal Father, (b) *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* The Inspired Apostle *Paul* said (c) *I count all things but loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.* These things being so, the *using of proper means* to promote and propagate *right knowledge*, must needs be look'd on as very *beneficial to mankind.* Our Fathers who first settled in this Wilderness, were well aware of this; and therefore in their early times, tho' they were few in number, poor and low in their worldly circumstances, conflicting with many dangers and difficulties, did found a *College* here, called *Harvard-College* in *Cam-*

(a) *Prov.* 19. 2.
(b) *John* 17. 3.
(c) *Phil.* 3. 8.

bridge

bridge in *New-England*; to train up Youth in good *Knowledge*, *Learning*, *Vertue*, that thereby they might be the better qualifi'd eminently to promote the glory of GOD, and good of Men. That GOD of all Grace, and giver of every good Gift, who enabled and inclined our Fathers to engage in this noble Work, has own'd and smil'd on, their pious designs in this matter. He has hitherto continu'd the *College*, and made it *a River, the Streams whereof make glad the City of God*. That many educated here, have been eminently serviceable in promoting both the spiritual and temporal welfare of this People (as well as in some other Countries) is too well known to need any proof. To the *College* thus begun in weak and low Circumstances, GOD of his meer Grace has rais'd up sundry kind, generous *Benefactors*, some at one time & some at another, some doing less and some more, to promote the noble and pious ends aim'd at in founding of it; thanks be to GOD for his Smiles herein. But the late THOMAS HOLLIS *Esq*; of *London*, *Merchant*, (now gone to his everlasting rest) did in his *Donations* to our *College*, far exceed any other of it's *Benefactors*. He *Founded two Professorships* in it, one for *Divinity*, the other for the *Mathematicks and Natural and Experimental Philosophy*. Out of the *Incomes* or Interest of his *Donations*, he order'd *fourscore*

pounds

pounds per Annum, in our Money, to each of his *Professors*; and *ten pounds* a piece *per Annum* to *ten poor Scholars* of a laudable Character, design'd for the work of the Gospel ministry, as an help to defray the charge of their Education; and *twenty pounds per Annum* to the *College Treasurer* for the time being, to reward him for his care and trouble in managing the *Donations* he has sent us. Besides these things, he has given us a curious *Apparatus* for *Mathematical and Phylosophical Experiments*. By his means we have *Hebrew* and *Greek Types* to be us'd in *Printing*; and he has at sundry times augmented our *College Library* with very *valuable Books*, partly of his *own Gift*, and partly by procurement from *Friends*. Indeed his Heart was extensively enlarg'd in doing good, in Essays to promote GOD's glory, and the well-fare of mankind. The express declarations in his *Statutes and Orders*, as well as many passages in his *Letters*, are plain Indications of the *great piety* prevailing in his Soul. May the Reverend Dr. *Wigglesworth*'s Sermon (his *Professor of Divinity*) occasion'd by the mournful News of his Death, and well adapted to the occasion, preach'd in the *College-Hall*, and made publick herewith, be follow'd by the Divine Blessing, to quicken Persons to *live in*, and *to the Lord*, that they may *die in the Lord and be blessed forever*. The subjoined Discourse

course, of his *Mathematical Professor* on the same occasion, may possibly be entertaining to the curious and *Phylosophical*, whether taking with ordinary Readers or not. May our very kind, generous *Benefactor's* Name, be ever precious and honourable in our *College* and *Churches*. May GOD, the GOD of all Grace, who has rais'd to our *College* all it's *Friends* and *Benefactors*, raise up more from time to time, to show to it that favour & kindness in all regards, which may be needful: and may *all who love it's prosperity prosper*. May the *College* be continued for a great Blessing to this whole Land, *as long as Sun and Moon shall endure*. And may all who wish it well, tho' not able to bestow *Gifts or Donations* on it, yet pour out their *earnest prayers* to GOD for it, that all who do or shall belong to it, may be furnish'd with *Knowledge*, *Learning*, *Grace*, and be made eminently Instrumental of advancing his Interest and Glory in the World.

Benjamin Wadsworth,
President of *Harvard College* in *Cambridge*, N. E.

Cambridge in New-England, *April* 29th 1731.

THE *Blessedness* of the *Dead* WHO *Die in the* LORD.

REVELATION XIV. 13.

And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.

UPON the sorrowful News, which reach'd us last Week, of the Death of the pious & charitable THOMAS HOLLIS Esq; the generous Founder of the Lectures on this Day, I question not but it is expected, as a Tribute due to the Memory of the greatest of the Benefactors to this Society,

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and which the Relation I have had the Honour [redacted] demands of me, that I should turn aside from the stated Exercises of the Day, to spend a few Tho'ts upon some Subject more peculiarly suited to such a Dispensation of Divine Providence. And considering the distinguishing Character of our departed Benefactor, I know not of any Passage in Scripture, which might fairly lead us into more proper Tho'ts upon such a solemn Occasion, than the Words which have now been read unto you. And therefore I have [redacted] at this Time.

Indeed the words can at no time be unfit to be the Meditation & the *Song* of the sincere Christian, while *in the House of his Pilgrimage.* However it may be at sometimes more especially pertinent and seasonable to employ our Tho'ts upon them than at others. The vast Importance of the Truths contained in them, is evidently held forth in the great Solemnity wherewith they are ushered in: *I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write.* A VOICE FROM HEAVEN-- Such as there was at the Baptism and at the Transfiguration of our Blessed Lord, by which it is said, *He received from God the Father honour and glory* (a). SAYING UNTO ME, WRITE-- This Command, I think, occurs no where else, but

but at the beginning of the Words of the Prophesy of this Book of the Revelation, which is introduced with much the same Solemnity. *I was in the Spirit*, says the Divine, *on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a Trumpet, saying, what thou seest write in a Book* (b). And again, *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter* (c). Now this Book of the Revelation comes recommended to our attentive study and meditation by a divine Benediction at the beginning: *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophesy, and keep those things that are written therein* (d). And towards the Close it is guarded with that awful Commination, *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophesy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book* (e). And yet all the Visions and Revelations of this important Book are not introduced with greater Marks of Honour and Distinction than what are set upon the single Passage under our Consideration; viz. *A Voice*

(b) *Rev.* 1. 10, 11. (c) v. 19. (d) v. 3.
(e) *chap.* 22, 18, 19.

 from

from Heaven, and a *special Command to commit to writing what is uttered*. As if these were the words most to be observed of any in the whole Book: and indeed they are worthy *to be graven with an iron Pen and Lead in the Rock forever*; and especially to be graven on the *Table of our Hearts*: both to the Glory of the Grace of God, who hath been pleased so solemnly to express such marvellous Good-will to apostate Men; and for the Excitement, Comfort, and unspeakable Rejoycing of all his faithful Servants.

In the Words there are two things which more especially demand our serious Attention: I. *A solemn declaration of the Blessedness of those who die in the Lord*; And, II. *Some account of the nature of the Blessedness so solemnly pronounced on them, or wherein it consists*: viz. That they *rest from their Labours, and their works do follow them*.

I. A solemn declaration of Blessedness to all those who die in the Lord. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth*, or from this time. From their Death we may date their Blessedness. They are no sooner dead than they are blessed. *Yea*, or verily they are so, *saith that Spirit*, who is elsewhere called *the Spirit of Truth*. Tho' their Bodies quickly *return to the dust from whence they were taken*, yet their *Spirits*, their better part, do not *go downward* together

gether with them,) but ascend *to God who gave them, to be ever with Him.* And this they do immediately; *from henceforth they are blessed.* Their Souls don't sink into a state of *Insensibility* for a time; nor do they undergo a Course of *Purgations* to prepare them for Admittance into that Place, where *nothing that defileth can enter*: but they are immediately made perfect in Holiness, and pass into Glory. *To be absent from the Body*, is to them *to be present with the Lord*: and in his presence is fulness of Joy, at his right hand are Pleasures for evermore.

'Tis true we may suppose (I think very allowably) that the *Blessedness* of them who *die in the Lord*, will not at once be just the *same in Degree*, as it will after their Bodies shall be raised *incorruptible, spiritual & glorious*, and be reunited to their Souls. For not till then *shall be brought to pass the Saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory* (f). And doubtless the Resurrection of the Body is designed for a Blessing to the People of GOD, as well as for the Glory of the Almighty Author of such an astonishing Work. However, thus much at least is certain, (as I have observed already) that immediately upon the Death of their Bodies, the *Spirits of just Men* are made perfect and happy. They immediately *rest* intirely and forever *from their*

(f) 1 Cor. 15. 54.

Labours,

Labours, and their works (at least *begin to*) *follow them.*

But it is not my Business yet to consider the *Nature of the Blessedness* they then enter upon. The great thing before us under the present head is to inquire carefully, *Who they are that may be said to die in the Lord?* That so we may know upon whom it is, that a Blessing is here so solemnly pronounced; and what we ourselves must do, that our last End may be like theirs.

Now some suppose, that these words in their *primary intention* respect *only such as die for the Lord's sake*; who rather than renounce their Faith in Him, and Obedience to Him, have been content to be accounted and treated as *Sheep for the Slaughter, and to be killed all the day long.* And it must be acknowledged, that such a Form of Expression is used in such a sense, not seldom in the New Testament. Thus, *Let no man judge you in meat or in drink*, Col. 2. 16. undoubtedly intends, let no man judge you *for the sake*, or *upon the account* of meat or of drink. And he is said *to be beloved in the Lord*, Rom. 16. 8. who was beloved for the Lord's sake. And diverse other Instances of the same nature might be mentioned.

However it is no less true, that such a Form of Expression is frequently us'd, *where no such limited sense can be put upon it.* Thus we read, 1 Cor. 15. 16, 17. *If Christ be not raised,*

sed, then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished: where by them that are *fallen asleep in Christ*, we cannot understand only those that *died Martyrs for his sake*; but must extend the meaning of the expression to *all such as shall rise again to everlasting life*. And so again, 1 *Thes.* 4 16. we are told, that *the dead in Christ shall rise first*: whereby the *dead in Christ* we are not to understand *Confessors* or *Martys only*; but *all those who shall be raised to a blessed Immortality*: because they are set in Opposition to such as shall *be alive and remain at that day*. Now since such a Form of Speech is often used in such an extensive sense, and it is certainly the most natural and obvious meaning of the words; I think we ought to take it in it's utmost Latitude, where there is nothing in the Context to forbid. And with respect to the Passage now under our Consideration, if the time would permit a critical Examination, it might be made to appear, that the Context rather favours as large an Interpretation, as the words simply considered can admit of.

And therefore by those who *die in the Lord*, upon whom the word *Blessed* is so solemnly pronounced in my Text, we may understand *all, and only those who can truly be said to have lived in him*: such as being united to Christ by a living Faith (as the *Branches* to the *Vine*) have derived those Supplies of Grace and spiritual Strength from him, which have

made them to be, not barren nor unfruitful, but abounding in the work of the Lord. I say *all such*; because it is certainly true, that they *all* both *rest from their Labours*, when they die, and have *their works to follow them*. And I say *only such*; because that whatsoever we may suppose, about the Possiblility that a Death-bed Sorrow for Sin, thro' the abundant Grace of GOD & Merits of Jesus Christ, may in some special Instances prove a Repentance unto Salvation; yet those who are the Subjects of it, seem not to be the Persons, who are said in my Text to *die in the Lord*: because it is plain that they have no Works to follow them; any further than Faith and Repentance may in some sense be called Works.

Nor can *they* be said to *die in the Lord*, who have only made *an high Profession of the Name of Christ, and of Faith in Him*, without having been careful to *do the things which he hath commanded them*. For our blessed Saviour hath assured us, Matth. 7. 21, 22, 23. *Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out Devils? and in thy Name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of Iniquity.*

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In a word, they who are *in Christ Jesus*, and *to whom* therefore *there is no Condemnation*, are such as *walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 1. Their Hearts have that holy Bent and Disposition, which is wro't in all those, that are *born of the Spirit*; by which they are inclined to *mortify the deeds of the body*. And their Lives are conducted according to the Rules dictated by the Spirit of Christ in the Gospel. And they who thus *live in the Lord*, shall not *in their Death be divided from Him*; but shall also *die in the Lord*. And *blessed* are the Men that are in such a case; *Yea, saith the Spirit*: For,

II. *They rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

1. *They rest from their Labours.* The original Word here translated *Labours*, is (as *Critics* tell us) of a very extensive Signification: so as to take in all the Tribulations, Calamities, Crosses & Troubles of every kind, under which the People of GOD, while in this their Earthly Tabernacles, do at any time groan being burthened. Now certainly, to be intirely and forever at rest from all these, is no inconsiderable Ingredient of true Happiness.

Man is born unto Trouble, and tends to it as naturally, as the Sparks fly upwards. And the Righteous are not exempted from the common Lot of Men in this regard; but there is one Event to them and to the Wicked. They are in Trouble as other Men. They are plagued like other Men.

Sometimes they meet with Losses & Crosses in their Estates. Their most hopeful Projects are defeated by some adverse Providence; or such Desolations are bro't upon them by the immediate hand of GOD, as all their Care, and Toil, and Skill, are not sufficient to retrieve; or else perhaps by the Injustice, Oppression and Violence of Men, they are reduced to Hunger, and Thirst, and Nakedness, and Want of all things. Or if none of these things befall them, but they prosper in the World, and Riches increase, yet they often prove a Temptation and a Snare: and Care & Trouble always increase in some proportion together with them; many times so much faster then Comfort and Satisfaction, that an Abundance of this World's Goods proves little better than Disappointment & Vexation of Spirit to the Possessors of them.

Again, Sometimes the good Name of the Righteous suffers, and they hear the Defaming of many. All manner of Evil shall be spoken of them without a Cause. Or if they have unhappily given too just occasion for Censure, thro' any Sin or Indiscretion, it shall be aggravated with the utmost Malice & Inhumanity: and that shall be charged upon them as their allowed prædominant Inclination, and fixed Character, which is the Grief & Abhorrence of their Souls. Nay, sometimes their very Good shall be evil spoken of. Their best Designs shall be suspected, and misrepresented; and their

their best Actions be ascribed to sordid & scandalous Inducements: and that not only in the *Song of the Drunkards*; but even Good Men themselves shall entertain hard tho'ts of them, and utter perverse things concerning them. Nor do they always receive such Treatment only from those who have long professed an Aversion to them; but their very Familiars shall sometimes watch for their Halting, that they may report it.

Sometimes again, they meet with sore Trouble in their Relatives or Friends. The Desire of their Eyes and the Joy of their Hearts is taken from them with a Stroke; or wasted before their Eyes with pining Sickness from day to day; or racked with tormenting Pains. Or perhaps a Child upon whom their Hearts have been much set, proves a foolish and a wicked one; is daily in all manner of Mischief; and no Perswasions, Reproofs, Corrections signify any thing to reclaim him; till at length by being wicked over much, he dies before his time. Or perhaps a perverse Spirit is mingled in the midst of those; who, by their mutual relation & circumstances, are under the strongest Tyes to dwell together in Unity; and so those, who should be a Comfort and Delight, become a continual Vexation of Spirit to one another.

Once more, the Righteous are sometimes afflicted in their Bodies. There is no soundness in their Flesh; but their Skin is black

upon them, and broken, & become loathsome. There is no Rest in their Bones; but they are chastened with Pain upon their Beds, and the multitude of their Bones with strong Pain. Or they are sore vexed and burnt with Heat, and their Sinnews can take no rest; but wearisome Days & Nights are appointed to them; so that in the Morning they are ready to say, by reason of their disquietness, Would GOD it were Evening; & at Evening, Would GOD it were Morning. In short, they are ready to wish for Strangling & Death rather than Life; and yet their Life remaineth whole within them.

To conclude, the Righteous are sometimes distressed in their Souls. They behold the Transgressions of others, and are grieved. They heartily wish well to the Interest & Kingdom of GOD their Saviour, but do not see it flourish according to their Desires; and for this cause their Souls weep in secret. They fall into Doubts & Misgivings of Heart about their own Sincerity, and lest they should one day perish by the hands of their Spiritual Adversaries; and this holdeth Sleep from their Eyes, and Slumber from their Eye-lids, till GOD is pleased to speak Peace to them. In fine, Sometimes thro' the Infirmity of the Flesh, and the Power of Temptation, they fall into heinous Sins; and then they feel the intolerable Anguish of a wounded Spirit: Destruction from the Almighty is a Terror to them, and by

reason

reason of His Highness they cannot endure; but are afflicted & ready to die, till He restores unto them the Joy of His Salvation.

Such Afflictions as these, and many others, more than can be reckoned up, GOD's dearest Children are all of them liable too in the present life; and none of them are suffered to escape wholly without them. *For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth* (g). And sometimes in His holy Providence He is pleased to exercise the same Person, with a Complication of most of these, and perhaps many other sore Troubles at the same time. We may well then join with the Royal Preacher (h), and *praise the dead which are already dead* (provided it be *in the Lord*) *more then the living which are yet alive*; because they who are *dead in the Lord* are now intirely & forever at Rest, both from the Sense & Fear of all this *Labour and sore Trvail*. But we cannot go on with him and say, *Better is he than both they, which hath not yet been*; because *the dead who are already dead in the Lord*, not only *rest from their Labours*, But

2. *Their Works do follow them.* And their Afflictions in this Life can be but light and for a Moment, if compared with the far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, which they work for them.

(g) *Heb.* 12. 6.
(h) *Eccl.* 4. 2, 3.

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The Words here translated *follow them*, might as well be rendred, *keep them company*, or *go along with them*. Their good Works, which while they lived were going up continually for a Memorial before GOD, when they die, *go along with them*, for a Testimony of the Sincerity of their Faith in him, and Love to him; 'And are accepted thro' the Mercy of GOD and Merits of Jesus Christ, to their eternal Honour & Advantage. Those works *go along with them*, to which the Promise of Glory & Immortality is made; to which the Favour of God is annexed, and the Rewards of Heaven solemnly promised; and these are the *works of the Spirit*; the Effects of noble Principles, and the Fruits of Faith unfeigned; the Works of Love, Beneficence, Justice, Patience, Humility, and all the Train of Virtues & Graces, the End of which is declared in the Gospel to be *eternal Life*.

But what is included in eternal Life we cannot thoroughly understand, unless we were able to comprehend the Glory and Happiness of the People of GOD in Heaven. Now this we have no Faculties large enough to reach to. 'Tis a Subject fitter for the Contemplation of a triumphant perfected Spirit, which walks by Sight, than for the Description of an imbodied Spirit, which lives by Faith, is clogg'd with Sin, and incircled with Darkness. Our full knowledge of the Blessedness of that Place,

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and our Admission into it, must commence together. 'For in Heaven the Excellency of 'the Goods possessed will exceed our Expectations, more than the emptyness of Enjoyments 'here on Earth used to disappoint them.

As Pain and Misery, so Joy and Gladness, may enter the Soul of Man by innumerable Passages. And we have good Reason to think that GOD will give us no Faculties in the Future State to be useless to us; but that the Faculties of them who *die in the Lord*, shall be all stretch'd to their utmost Capacity, and that Capacity filled with unalloyed Delight and Satisfaction. For they shall then behold GOD Face to Face; and in His Presence the Joys will be full, and the Pleasures everlasting.

Besides a more pure and perfect Relish of those Rivers of Pleasures, which good Men sometimes taste of here with extreme delight (besides these, I say) there are other Joys so peculiar to Heaven, that their Ideas cannot possibly enter into the Tho'ts of Men on Earth. For the Apostle assures us, 2 Cor. 12. 4. that when *he was caught up into Paradise, he heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for man to utter.* Which seems to intimate, 'that what he had heard was so in-'finitely different, from any thing he had ever 'heard in *this World*, that it was not possible 'for him to express it, in such words as might 'convey a notion of it to the Hearers. And

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again he tells us, 1 Cor. 2. 9. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* And well indeed may the Preparations of Almighty Power, directed by infinite Wisdom, and prompted by infinite Goodness, transcend Imagination.

I have now exhibited a rough and very imperfect Prospect of the *Blessedness of them who die in the Lord*; so far as it is set forth in my Text, by their resting from their Labours, and their Works following them. I may not detain you with the many profitable & seasonable Reflections, which what you have heard would naturally lead me into: but must content my self to mention only Three or Four very briefly.

As

1. *What we have heard teaches us, what we ourselves must do, if we would die in the Lord.* — Then the Life which we now live in the Flesh must be by the Faith of the Son of GOD. We must walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit; and thro' the Spirit mortify the deeds of the Body. For nothing can be more vain, than to expect to die the Death of the Righteous; if we are not careful to live a righteous, and sober, and godly Life. Nothing can be plainer from the Scriptures, than that the only Road to an happy Death is a Christian Life: and that they only can with any degree of Assurance be said to *die in the Lord*;

Lord, who have lived with all the Essential Characters of His Disciples upon them.

2. *What we have heard should support and comfort the People of God under the Afflictions with which He is pleased at any time to exercise them.* They are of that blessed Number who shall in due time rest from their Labours, and whose Works shall follow them. And in Proportion to their Resignation to the Will of GOD, and to their Diligence & Fidelity in the discharge of the Duties of their Afflicted State, their Reward will be great in Heaven.

3. *From what we have heard we may conclude, that they who are careful to live in the Lord, have no reason to be subject to Bondage thro' fear of Death.* To die will be unto them, but to rest from the Labours, Sufferings & Sorrows of the present Life, and go to their Reward.

4. *What we have heard should teach us to moderate our Mourning for our departed Friends, when we have reason to think concerning them, that they die in the Lord.* They now rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them. Let us not mourn then, as they that are without Hope. While they were with us here on Earth, our Love made whatsoever was Matter of great Rejoycing unto *them*, become an inexpressible Pleasure and Satisfaction to *us* also. Let us continue the same kindness for the dead, which we bare

the living: And now they are gone to be with Christ, which is best of all; let not *us* grieve at *that*, which *they* rejoice in with Joy unspeakable. But for our Relief & Comfort, let us entertain ourselves with the transporting Prospect of what the Scriptures teach us to believe, concerning the Blessedness of those who die in the Lord. That their Souls do immediately (upon their Separation from the Body) pass into Glory, and are present with their Saviour. That their Bodies whose Beauty is now turned to Gastliness and Corruption, shall at length be raised without Sin or Sorrow, immortal & spiritual; and be fashioned like to Christ's Glorious Body. That in the mean time their Souls have the Pleasure, and the Honour of the Society of the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, of an innumerable Company of Angels, and of Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant; who hath redeemed them with his Blood. That they shall be ever with Him to behold his Glory; and their Happiness never know any Interruption, Remission, or End; but be perfect & everlasting. That they love GOD with all their Hearts, are made like unto Him, and see Him Face to Face; have as lively an Apprehension of his Presence, as we have of the Presence of any Person before our Eyes. That they are rejoicing continually in the Presence of Him, whom they love and honour with all their Strength; in the presence of an alsufficient GOD, who

likewise

likewise rejoyces over them to do them good; whom they know to be able & resolved to satisfy them intirely with the Fruits of his Loving Kindness, and to preserve them from all Evil; and are assured that He will do both these forever for them.

This is the *Blessedness* of those who *die in the Lord*; so far as the Scriptures represent it to us. And it is the highest Pitch of Blessedness, the most worthy of Divine Goodness to bestow, and the best adapted to our Nature to receive, that we can possibly imagine for our selves or Friends. And yet when the Scriptures have thus carried our Tho'ts of future Happiness, as high as they are able to rise, they still assure us (as I have observed above) that our Conceptions fall far below the Truth.

And now if we believe our Departed Friends to be in the Actual Injoyment of such things as these, we should not mourn for them, but for our selves, who are still absent from the Lord, and clogg'd with Sin. And we should be Imitators of them, who by patient continuance in well doing, have obtained Glory, Honour and Immortality; that so, when our own Turn comes, we also may die in the Lord, and enter into Rest, and our Works may follow us.

It only remains, that in Justice & Gratitude to an Eminent Servant of GOD, who lately died in the Lord, and is gone before us to a blessed Immortality, we proceed to take Notice of some things for which his Name ought to

be precious, and to be had in everlasting Remembrance with us.

It cannot reasonably be expected, That I should presume to essay the Character of a Gentleman, who was no otherwise known to me, than by that Spirit of unaffected Piety which always breathed in his Letters; and by those Good Works, for which all Succeeding Generations among us must rise up and call him blessed. I shall therefore only observe Two or Three things with respect to his Bountious Donations to this Society, which I think ought not to be passed over in Silence.

As,

1. *That he did not refer his Works of Piety and Charity to the Directions of his last Will and Testament; but chose in them to be his own Executor.* Or in other words, that he did not hold fast his Worldly Goods, as long as he himself was capable of enjoying them, and then give part of them away from those who were to succeed him; but honoured the Lord with his Substance, during his own Life.

2. *That the Expressions of his Bounty were not confined to a Party.* And indeed by his frequent and ample Benefactions, for the Incouragement of Theological, as well as Humane Knowledge among *us*, who are Christians of a different Denomination from *himself*, he hath set such an Example of a Generous, Catholic and Christian Spirit, as hath never before fallen within my Observation; nor (so far

far as I now remember) within my Reading. However, it was nothing but what appeared in the constant Tenor of his Letters, that he did not apprehend the *Kingdom of God to consist in Meat and Drink, but in Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.* I hope the Shining Example he hath set herein, will be an irresistable Inducement to those that shall have the Government of this Society in all times to come, religiously to comply with the very modest Reservations he hath made, in favour of those of his own Denomination among us.

3. 'Tis no mean Stroke in his Character in my account, *That he did not content himself to make ample Bequests to this Society, and then leave it to the Consciences of them who had, or might hereafter have the Direction of it, to see that they were well improved: but hath from first to last taken the utmost care to put it (as far as was possible) out of our Power to misimprove them, or in any Measure to defeat his pious Intentions.* This looks not like One that sought the Praise of Men, but who was sincerely concerned, that the Usefulness, as well as the Memory of his Bounties, might be perpetuated, to the Glory of GOD and the real Good of his People.

These, not to mention other Instances, are strong Presumptions, that he was one, whose Life was conducted by the Laws of Christ; since it appeared to be so filled with the Fruits

of

of His Spirit: And therefore we may well conclude him one of the blessed who died in the Lord; and that he now rests from his Labours, and his Works follow him. And though for this Reason we may not lament his Death upon his own account; yet we ought to consider, and lay it to Heart as a Loss, not only to this Society, but to all the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ thro' the Land; so far as the Incouragement of Religion & Learning among *us*, is of Importance unto *them*. And at the same time we ought to return most hearty and abundant Thanks to GOD, who was pleased to inspire him with so much Good-Will to us, and continue him so great a Blessing to us, for so many Years.

Nor may it ever be objected in Prejudice to his Memory, that he hath founded Two Professorships among us, which are called after His Name, without setling such a Support of them, as is sufficient for the Exigence of the present Times. His other ample Benefactions, such as his charitable Assistance to indigent but deserving Students, devoted to the work of the Ministry; the fine and costly *Apparatus* for experimental Philosophy; and the noble Addition of valuable Books to our Public Library; are enough to render his Name forever dear and honourable.

I shall only add my sincere and fervent Prayers, that the End of his pious & charitable Foundations may always be well answered: That

That they may be unto him for a Name better than that of Sons and Daughters; and that the best of Blessings may descend upon all that were dear to him; and especially upon him whom he hath distinguished by the Expressions of his Esteem and Affection.

A M E N.
